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HOW THE FOUR-H CLUBS HAVE IMPROVED THE
HOUSES IN OUR COMMUNITY

A radio talk by Elizabeth Cheseboro, 4-H club girl, Newport County, R.I., delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, January 5, 1935, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

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Our club in Jamestown, Rhode Island, has found the room improvement project one of the most interesting we have taken up in our seven years of four-H club work. We have all enjoyed planning ways to add to the attractiveness of our own rooms, and sometimes also of other rooms in our homes, and then we have found it very interesting as well as involving plenty of hard work to put our plans into effect.

Mrs. Coleman Tefft, leader of our club, has a most attractive home and after we had had a year or two of foods and clothing work, she suggested that we take up the house furnishing or room improvement project. The idea appealed to us and we have found the work of help not only to ourselves but to many others in the community.

We have had demonstrations in room planning, in color harmonies, re-finishing furniture, and in making many inexpensive but very usable articles for our rooms. Other clubs heard about the work we were doing and we have been asked several times to exhibit samples of our work at county and state 4-H gatherings. It has pleased us to see our ideas used by other clubs, as well as by those who are not members of 4-H clubs.

One of our members refinished and modernized three bedrooms and a kitchen. A leader's meeting was held at this particular girl's home recently in order that the excellent ideas she had used might be observed by those from other clubs.

Another girl extended her improvement efforts to the outside of the house. She put her emphasis on making a dull-looking back yard into an attractive flower garden.

One girl made a charming, bright kitchen in her home in an old farmhouse.

Many such instances could be cited as a result of the house furnishing demonstrations we have had in our 4-H club.

We have learned to refinish walls, woodwork, furniture, and how to make many attractive articles for the home at a very low cost.

We made hassocks by tying seven coffee cans together, padding them with cotton batting, and covering them with chintz.

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Attractive door stops were also made with coffee cans. The cans were filled half full of sand, and the head of a small doll was attached securely to the cover. The entire doll was then dressed attractively in corresponding colors of oilcloth.

Silhouette paintings became a fascinating enterprise in our home improvement project, and were exhibited throughout the county and state.

Attractive bookcases were made from orange crates by adding a few extra boards and a little paint.

Shoeboxes for clothespresses were made of cardboard and covered with attractive chintzes.

Many hooked rugs and braided rugs were made to add to the attractiveness of the rooms.

The making of curtains and the study of methods of window treatment proved an interesting and helpful subject.

Pillows of organdy and animals of checked gingham added much to the gayety of bedrooms.

When making such articles as these much attention was given to the color scheme in order that each article would have its place in adding to the attractiveness of the room.

But it is not only in our own local community and county that the 4-H members are taking up and enjoying the house furnishing work.

Scores of 4-H girls throughout Rhode Island are each year utilizing their 4-H training in rearranging and redecorating their rooms. Also, in connection with the foods or home management work many girls have assisted in the rearranging of kitchens, resulting in the saving of many steps and making it much easier to do the daily tasks. Brightening up and redecorating the kitchens has also frequently occurred.

One 4-H girl whose home was badly damaged by smoke and water from a fire a few months ago, was allowed to use the insurance money in redecorating the entire house both inside and outside. She says, "I know it is not often that a girl of my age is given the chance to express her own ideas in repairing and refurnishing a house, but I am sure the better environment I have created has come about by what has been taught me in my 4-H club work."

The House Furnishing work has made our 4-H club members realize that through their efforts, their homes could be made more pleasant places in which to live, and we are glad to know that we have done something to help extend this feeling to many others outside of the 4-H clubs in our own local community.